

Fremont

Building Official

Code Enforcement

WINDOW SIZING AND MEANS OF EMERGENCY EGRESS

Meeting window size for means of emergency egress, the following requirement is from Life safety Code.

.....Life Safety Code 24.2.2.1 Number of Means of Escape.

In any dwelling or dwelling unit of two rooms or more, every sleeping room and every living area shall have not less than one primary means of escape and one secondary means of escape....

Similarly, International Code Council provides the same requirements in the International Residential Code.

Two means of escape must be provided – a primary and a secondary. Generally the doorway of entry provides for the primary means of egress while a second door or window may provide for the secondary means of escape. A window must meet certain minimum requirements, generally among them are:

- an outside window operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or special effort
- sized such to provide a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet and further restricted to be not less than 20 inches in width and not less than 24 inches in height
- the bottom of the window opening is not to be more than 44 in. above the floor.
- the window must be within 20 ft of grade.
- the window shall be directly accessible to fire department rescue apparatus

This is a safety provision reducing the risk of being trapped if an exit pathway is obstructed by fire or some other hazard. This requirement is a minimum standard for all residential dwellings - some exceptions do exist – further consult the code if you are having problems adhering to this requirement.

When designing and placing windows in your new construction consider the aspects of this code and check the window sizing before framing. It takes a pretty large window to meet the requirements of 5.7 square feet net opening; for instance a 28 in. by 30 in. (5.8 sq ft) would meet the requirements while a 28 in. by 28 in. would not (5.4 sq ft). This measurement is taken as the net clear opening, for example on a double hung window, with the bottom sash raised the available width and height opening is measured.